

# DR. KAREN HETHERINGTON

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## KEY SKILL AREAS

- Business policy, procedure and system development in accountability, audit and quality and the use of statistical tools (6 Sigma) for the evaluation of process performance.
- Design and implementation of mechanisms for stakeholder dialogue and two way information flows in SME and academic environments and development of continuous improvement systems
- Design and implementation of social and quality based auditing systems
- Comprehensive knowledge of corporate activity in social accountability and the influence of standard setting bodies, policy and legislation
- Use of qualitative and quantitative research techniques
- Creation of information technology systems using website design

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2001 – Present *FM Foods, Sunderland, Project Manager*  
*Importer of fairly traded dried fruits from partners in developing countries*

- Training and quality systems development with a dried fruit exporting SME in Uganda
- Management of Quality Control personnel
- Undertaken research and engaged in dialogue with producers in Africa and Asia to develop social systems and fulfil certification requirements for social systems such as FLO and IFAT and audit against these requirements
- Initiated & implemented policy and established mechanisms for review and development in areas including:
  - Environment, Social Responsibility, Health & Safety and Equal Opportunity
- Designed and undertaken internal audits against corporate procedures in the areas of quality, health and safety and social responsibility
- Implemented employee development systems in accordance with the principles of Investors in People, successfully gaining accreditation
- Project initiation and development using Six Sigma principles and statistical tools focusing on process efficiency
- Established and developed a continuous improvement system incorporating stakeholder feedback. Including measurable goals and targets to enable optimum performance and improved accountability.
- Designed policy, procedures and internal audits, whilst working with the Technical Director and external advisors, to successfully achieve British Retail Consortium (BRC) standard, grade A for our quality system
- Developed and managed the Tropical Wholefoods website  
 (<http://www.tropicalwholefoods.co.uk>)

1997 – 2001 *Centre for Environmental Informatics, University of Sunderland, Researcher*

- Database development
- Collection and cataloguing of an extensive library of corporate social, environmental and sustainability reports
- Data collection through questionnaire design, and qualitative analysis via content analysis and data evaluation and report writing
- Designed and maintained an award winning internet based social accountability resource
- Project work in the areas of social accountability and sustainability
- Responded to queries from academics and organisations on corporate accountability

## PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS AND COMMITTEES

**Committees**

- Board member for the North East Food and Drink Network, 2005
- Member of a social audit panel for the Jesmond Swimming Pool, April 2005, in conjunction with the Valuing the Difference Project

**Corporate Presentations**

- Two workshops on fair trade at the Young Co-Operatives Congress, March 2005, Stockton.
- Workshop on fair trade and Tropical Wholefoods to Oxfam Volunteers, 2004, York
- Co-presented a workshop at IFAT (International Fair and Alternative Trade) conference on Quality Management and Continuous Improvement at University of Newcastle, June 2003
- ACCA conference presentation on Corporate Social Disclosure: Why & How? Blackpool, UK, 1999

**Academic Presentations**

- Lecture on Corporate Social Responsibility for the MSc Environment, Health and Safety course, University of Sunderland, March 2003
- Lecture on PhD Research – Corporate Social Reporting, University of Sunderland, 1999
- Tutor for BSc Environmental Studies degree, Environmental Issues Module, 1998-2000

**Publications and Website Design**

- Design of the Step Systems website, funded by DFID (2005) – Step Systems work with international organisations and local businesses, particularly in Africa developing software packages for managing information and knowledge.
- Stakeholder Roles in Engineering Development Processes – Chapter in PhD Thesis Michelle Young, School of Computing, University of Sunderland, June 2004
- Corporate Community Investment, Getting the Message? A Report on Best Practice in Communicating CCI, (2000), Co-authors: Hendersons Investors Ltd and Roger Cowe, published by Communications Management
- Creating an award winning Corporate Social and Ethical Reporting Clearinghouse (<http://cei.ac.uk/ethsocial.html>). Linked by EU and UK government sustainable development websites. Parts of the site also published in Financial Information Analysis, Philip O Regan (2001), John Wiley and Sons, UK

## SKILLS/ TRAINING

- Social Systems Auditor/Lead Auditor Training Course, SGS, ICRA Certified, May 2005
- Six Sigma Black Belt, University of Newcastle, 2003-2004
- Professional Trainers, CIEH, October 2004
- Attended conferences in the field of corporate accountability and ethical trading between 1997 and present, notably the launch of AA1000 by the Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability, Copenhagen; Development of Ethical Trading – ETI and Corporate Social Responsibility – ISEA
- Attended courses in Internal Auditing, BRC Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) and Quality System Implementation held at the Food Technology Centre, Teesside University, completed the RIPH Basic Food Hygiene computer package
- Computer literate in: - Frontpage/Photoshop and Dreamweaver/Fireworks
  - MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access)
  - Minitab

## EDUCATION

2003 – 2004

*University of Newcastle*

- Six Sigma: Black Belt – project management and the use of statistical methodology to improve process control and product flow

1997-2002

*University of Sunderland*

- PhD: Corporate Social Disclosure and the Influence of Accountability Standards. Involved evaluating corporate electronic and hardcopy disclosure to determine the influence of accountability standards on themes disclosed and quality of disclosure

1993 – 1996                      *University of Sunderland*

- BSc Environmental Studies: Class 2:1
- Final year dissertation on the subject of Fair Trade and Consumerism

#### INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

I enjoy independent travelling with trips to Australasia, Africa and South America. I also enjoy reading, walking, creating kiln formed glass and I am currently developing my Spanish. I have also volunteered on several conservation projects, most recently on the Galapagos Islands for one month.